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Memorandum of Conversation 76 2.00/2-1759

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DATE: February 17, 1959

SUBJECT: Gromyko's Reaction to Delivery of German note on Four-Power Conference

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Wilhelm Turnwald, First Secretary, German Embassy;
Mr. Edward L. Freers, Director, Office of Eastern European Affairs.

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Dr. Turnwald read me the substance of Ambassador Kroll's report of his conversation with Foreign Minister Gromyko when the German note on the Four-Power conference was presented.

Gromyko said that the matter of the date and place for such a conference would be considered and the Soviet Government would present its views. Gromyko commented that the formula proposed in the German note would call for a discussion of reunification of Germany. He set forth the standard Soviet line that this was a matter for the two Germans. He said that a discussion of European security and disarmament would not be helpful but, on the contrary, would make progress at the conference more difficult.

Ambassador Kroll presented the German view that discussion of these problems was required in order to work toward a relaxation of tension which would make the solution of the difficult problems of Berlin and Germany easier. Ambassador Kroll reported that it was his impression that the Soviets might talk about European security but probably would be unwilling to discuss disarmament problems in the conference proposed.

At the end of the conversation, Gromyko tossed out a few words in German, which Ambassador Kroll reported was a highly unusual thing for Gromyko to do and probably was intended to give the conversation an especially friendly tone.

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